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KNOW THE SIGNS THAT SOMEONE MAY BE CONTEMPLATING SUICIDE

September is Suicide Prevention Month



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MILTON, FLA. - September is National Suicide Prevention Month, a time for us to think about ways we can help prevent suicide. In the United States, suicide is the tenth leading cause of death for all Americans. Suicide was responsible for more than 48,000 deaths in 2018, with a 35% increase in rates from 1999-2018. However, we know suicide is preventable and the Florida Department of Health in Santa Rosa County (DOH Santa Rosa) has made suicide prevention a priority.

During these times of increased social distancing, it is especially important to care for your mental health by maintaining social connections and remaining aware of signs indicating that someone may be at increased risk for suicide.

“Research shows people who are having thoughts of suicide feel relief when someone asks about them in a caring way. More and more findings suggest acknowledging and talking about suicide may reduce rather increase suicidal ideation. Everyone needs to be familiar with the risk factors and warning signs of suicide,” said Matt Dobson, Santa Rosa County Public Health Services Manager for Community Health.

RISK FACTORS for Suicide:

- Relationship problems (loss of girlfriend/boyfriend, divorce, etc.).
- History of previous attempts.
- Substance abuse.
- History of depression or other mental illness.
- Family history of suicide or violence.
- Work related problems.
- Life transitions.
- A serious medical problem.
- Significant loss (death of loved one, loss due to natural disasters, etc.).
- Current/pending disciplinary or legal action.
- Setbacks (academic, career, or personal).
- Severe, prolonged, and/or perceived unmanageable stress.
- A sense of powerlessness, helplessness, and/or hopelessness.

WARNING SIGNS for Suicide:

- Talk of suicide or killing someone else.

- Giving away property or disregard for what happens to one's property.
- Withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Problems with girlfriend, boyfriend, or spouse.
- Acting bizarre or unusual (based on your knowledge of that person).
- Having a desire to die.
- Formulating a plan to include acquiring the means to kill oneself.
- Obsession with death (music, poetry, artwork.)
- Themes of death in letters and notes.
- Finalizing personal affairs.
- Sleeping too little or too much.
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain.
- Talking about being a burden to others.
- Displaying extreme mood swings.
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs.

SUICIDAL RISK is highest when:

- The person sees no way out and fears things may get worse.
- The predominant emotions are hopelessness and helplessness.
- Thinking is constricted with a tendency to perceive his or her situation as all bad.
- Judgement is impaired by use of alcohol or other substances.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month. All month, mental health advocates, prevention organizations, survivors, allies, and community members unite to promote suicide prevention awareness.

National Suicide Prevention Week is September 6th-12th, surrounding World Suicide Prevention Day, it is a time to share resources and stories, as well as promote suicide prevention awareness.

World Suicide Prevention Day is September 10. It is a time to remember those affected by suicide, to raise awareness, and to focus efforts on directing treatment to those who need it most.

If you need help or know of someone who does, call the SUICIDE Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255). You can also text "GULF" to 741741. The Crisis Text Line is free, 24/7, and offers confidential crisis support by text.

References:

1. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org.
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/strategic-plan/index.html?deliveryName=DM36809>

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